

William Pinto (Eli Whitney) House
275 Orange Street
(east side of Orange between
Elm and Wall Streets)
New Haven
New Haven County
Connecticut.

HABS No. CONN-277
HABS
CONN.
5-NEWHA
28-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
801 - 19th Street N.W.
Washington, D.C.

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. CONN-277

WILLIAM PINTO (ELI WHITNEY) HOUSE

HABS
CONN
5-NEWHA
28-

Location: 275 Orange Street (east side of Orange between Elm and Wall Streets), New Haven, New Haven County, Connecticut.

Present Owner: Emerson L. Munson, Northrup Road, Woodbridge, Conn.

Present Occupant: The Munson Gallery.

Present Use: Ground floor, basement and rear addition used for gallery and work rooms. Second floor contains offices, third floor (attic) contains apartment.

Statement of Significance: Excellent small Federal town house attributed to carpenter-architect David Hoadley. It is reputed to be the house where Eli Whitney, inventor, lived and died. House is situated on land included in the estate of Theophilus Eaton, first governor of the New Haven Colony.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: Following is an incomplete chain of title taken from the New Haven Land Records for the City of New Haven, Land Records Office, Orange Street, New Haven, Conn. Reference is to volume and page number.
 - 1799 William Pinto bought the land from Samuel Bishop for \$700 (and presumably built a house on it within five years). Vol. 48, p. 362.
 - 1818 House mortgaged to Eli Whitney. Vol. 68, p. 59.
 - 1840 William Pinto sold it to Jacob Scovill II. Vol. 102, p. 35.
 - 1841 Jacob Scovill II to Jonas B. Bowditch, Vol. 102, p. 306.
(no record) Estate of J. B. Bowditch to George and Emma L. Quinan.
 - 1880 Quinan to Mary H. Mallory, Vol. 337, p. 514.
 - 1890 Mary H. Mallory to Annie L. Douglass, Vol. 428, p. 155.

1929 Annie L. Douglass to T. Henry Kellogg as mortgage,
Vol. 1196, p. 118.

1937 Mortgage released and Douglass sold to Emerson L.
Munson, Vol. 1356, p. 495.

2. Date of erection: c. 1805.
3. Architect: Attributed to Carpenter-Architect David Hoadley
(1774-1838) by New Haven Preservation Trust.

Builder: Possibly Hoadley, although there are no records.
4. Original plans, construction, etc.: Building has been
preserved in original state with exception of bow window
on front and the addition in rear.
5. Alterations and additions: Both rear addition and bow
window were added by Emerson Munson when he converted
the house for business purposes in 1929.
6. Important old views: None.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

Tradition in New Haven holds that Eli Whitney, inventor of
the cotton gin and a manufacturer of muskets and rifles lived
in this house and died there in 1825. Whitney was also great
financier in early New Haven.

William Pinto was a merchant when New Haven was a great sea-
port. He spent many years away from home; in Trinidad and in
the Atlantic islands. He owned a few houses and a large
amount of land in and around New Haven, much of it on the
wharfside. These holdings were continually used in mortgages.
The house on Orange Street, however, was held in unquestionable
"fee simple" with no encumbrances until 1818 when it was taken
in mortgage by Eli Whitney. The only evidence we have of any
connection between Whitney and the Pinto House is that he took
a mortgage on it and there is no record of a release of the
mortgage, a not uncommon discrepancy of that time.

Munson rented the premises from Douglass for several years
before purchasing it in 1937.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Dana, Arnold G. New Haven Old and New, unpublished scrap-
books in the Archives of the New Haven Colony Historical
Society, 114 Whitney Avenue, New Haven, Conn.

Interviews with John D. Hoag, Art Librarian, Chairman of the Standards Committee, The New Haven Preservation Trust, Yale University Art Library, York Street, New Haven, Conn.

2. Secondary and published sources:

The New Haven City Directory, 1840 to 1952 (copies in Yale Library, Public Library, Town Clerk's Office and New Haven Colony Historical Society Library, New Haven, Conn.).

New Haven Register newspaper. April 24, 1929 and April 24, 1964.

Prepared by Jonathan B. Conant
Research Assistant
National Park Service
August 1964

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural interest: Small two-and-one-half story, three bay Federal style town house. Exterior retains original character except for modern show window. Much of carpenter-architect David Hoadley's fine interior detail survives.
2. Condition of fabric: The present owner, Munson Art Gallery, has maintained the structure in good condition, protecting original interior details from damage as much as possible.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The house, excluding the modern cement block addition on the rear, measures 28'-0-1/4" across the front by 50'-4-3/4" in depth. It is a rectangle of three bays and has two and one-half stories, excluding basement.
2. Foundations: The rubble masonry foundation walls are exposed on the north and south sides but stuccoed with red sandstone on the west front.
3. Wall construction: Wooden clapboard siding, painted yellow, with white trim.

4. Framing: Wood frame.
5. Porches, stoops, etc.: The entrance stoop is red sandstone with a cast-iron railing. There is also a concrete stoop with cast-iron railing on the south side toward the rear.
6. Chimneys: There is one brick chimney with four flues and two brick chimneys with two flues each.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance doorway which is located at the side of the front is original. It consists of an arched opening with very narrow paneled pilasters. This trim is set within larger scaled pilasters which are plain. Heavy ornamented scroll brackets frame into the pilasters below the capitals and support a projecting gabled hood over the doorway. The underside of the hood consists of three paneled sections on each slope. The soffit of the brackets are reeded. Each bracket terminates in a full small-scaled entablature, richly ornamented. The wooden door is five-panelled; the uppermost panel is horizontal. Above the door is a leaded fanlight with radiating muntins connected by a pair of beaded swags. Rosettes and very small-scaled pineapple motifs are incorporated in the fan design. The remaining exterior door on the south side is also a five-paneled wooden door. There is no ornamental trim other than a simple horizontal cornice.
 - b. Windows and shutters: There is a Palladian window in the west front gable. The window in the center bay is single hung with six lights in the lower sash and eleven lights in the upper sash which has a semi-circular head. The side lights are glazed with three lights each. Pilasters and projecting cornices (over the side with three lights only) form the trim. All other windows are double hung one-over-one wooden sash with plain trim and a horizontal molded cornice above. These windows have dark green adjustable louver wooden shutters in place.
8. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: A simple gabled roof with the gable end facing Orange Street. The roof is covered with modern asphalt shingles which the present owner states were installed directly over an earlier standing-seam tin roof.

b. Cornice: Simple wooden cornice.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plan: Although the house has been altered on all floors, the basic plan of the first floor remains intact. The house is two rooms wide, three rooms deep. Entrance and stair hall are located on the south side of west front. A doorway to the left of stair hall leads to a large room with the most elaborate of the fireplaces. A doorway at the rear of the hall leads to another large room which was the dining room; beyond this is a room with a large kitchen-type fireplace and exterior door on the south wall. There are two doors on the east wall of the front room, one to the presumed dining room and the other to a smaller room. This room is divided by a service stair from a small room on the northeast corner.
2. Stairways: The main stairway is a straight run just inside the front door on the south wall. It is an open stringer with a small triangular molding pattern on each step. The handrail is un molded rounded mahogany. The balusters are plain square members. The newel is a cluster of balusters in a spiral bottom tread. Back stairs is located between middle room and rear room on the north side.
3. Flooring: Wooden.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster and modern perforated hardboard and fabric panels.
5. Doorways and doors: Simple wooden trim. All downstairs doors have been removed.
6. Decorative features and trim: The molded cornice of the northwest room on the first floor is continued in a molding in the ceiling plane. Two arched alcoves flank the fireplace. Each arch has a wooden keystone motif which is supported by paneled pilasters. The interior of the alcove is rectangular but the shelving is cut in a single convex curve within. Modern drawers have been fitted in the lower half.
7. Notable hardware: None.
8. Lighting: Modern electric fixtures.

9. Heating: Central heat with floor registers. Three of the four fireplaces are visible. In the northwest room the wide fireplace with cast-iron closure is faced with brick and trimmed with reeded pilasters and a combination of carved sunbursts and reeding. In the dining room which is the center room on the south side, the fireplace trim consists of two rows of simple wooden paneling over the opening and paneled pilasters. There is a cast-iron closure at the opening. In the kitchen, the very wide fireplace is brick and stone with pot-hooks intact. The width of the stone hearth indicates that there is also incorporated a bake oven behind the modern perforated hardboard wall covering. The fourth fireplace on the north side is intact, though the details are not visible since fireplace is hidden behind office furnishings.

D. Site and Surroundings:

1. General setting and orientation: Located on the east side of Orange Street between Elm and Wall Streets, facing west.
2. Outbuildings: A modern one-story concrete-block wing has been added on the rear of the original house.
3. Landscaping: The house sits between two asphalt paved parking lots in a commercial area of downtown New Haven.

Prepared by Woodrow W. Wilkins
Supervisory Architect
National Park Service
August 1964

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records and four sheets of measured drawings were prepared as part of the Summer, 1964 New Haven Project, jointly undertaken by the HABS and the New Haven Preservation Trust, and financed by "Mission 66" funds of the National Park Service with assistance from the NHPT, following a 1963 HABS inventory survey of old New Haven carried out by the NHPT under the direction of Professor Christopher Tunnard of Yale University, President.

The project was under the direction of the Eastern Office of Design and Construction, James C. Massey, HABS Supervisory Architect, and was supervised by Architect Woodrow W. Wilkins, Professor of Architecture at the University of Kentucky, assisted by Ned Goode, Photographer, Frazier, Pennsylvania; Annette H. M. Gottschalk, William P. Hersey, and Charles R. Tichy, Student Assistant Architects and students at Carnegie Institute

HABS
CONN
S-NEWHA
28-

WILLIAM PINTO
(ELI WHITNEY) HOUSE
HABS No. CONN-277 (Page 7)

of Technology, Yale University, and Iowa State University, respectively;
and Jonathan B. Conant, Research Assistant and student at Yale University.